

doggy style

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Summary

In which Jeon Jeongguk is a dog walker, Min Yoongi is a world-famous rapper, and Min Holly is done with everyone's shit.

Notes

in case there's any confusion--all prose scenes are in jeongguk's pov. all texting bits are in yoongi's.

inspired by a friend of mine who worked as a dog walker and had a similar incident occur, with creative liberties taken, ofc.

thank you to sarah the yoongi encyclopedia and moon for the beta job (and the title) <3

Jeon Jeongguk can count the number of stupid decisions he's made on one hand.

("No you absolutely *cannot*." Jimin narrows his eyes. "Maybe the ones that almost got you killed, I'll give you that. But counting *all* the stupid things would take, like. At least twenty-seven hands, give or take.")

"Life-threatening is not the same thing as stupid," Jeongguk pouts.

Jimin just stares at him. Then downs his third glass of champagne like it's water.)

Up until today, the stupid decisions were as follows: the time Jeongguk tried to drink 21 shots for his 21st birthday (made it to 12, threw up spectacularly into a dumpster outside a Denny's), the time Jeongguk tried to race Taehyung down an inflatable water slide (flipped over the side, plummeted fifteen feet, split his chin open on the pavement but somehow managed not to break a single bone), the time Jeongguk crashed his bike and broke his pinky finger (a praying mantis flew onto his hand and he screamed and flailed and crashed into a light post), the time he tried bleaching his hair and almost went bald (his follicles, as it turned out, are surprisingly sensitive), and the time he drunkenly kicked a palm frond on vacation and got a three-inch thorn stuck straight through his foot (he was fine, but there's footage of him on Jimin's phone where he's drunk and crying in an Urgent Care that will haunt him until the day he fucking dies).

But other than that infinitesimally small list, that was it. That was the top five most stupid things Jeon Jeongguk had ever done.

Until today. Until right now, this moment, right here.

Somehow, none of the aforementioned instances have made Jeongguk want to die *quite* so badly as this one.

But he's getting ahead of himself.

A few things you should know about Jeongguk before getting into the thick of it are:

1. he is a senior in college.
2. he is a broke senior in college.
3. he is a broke senior in college who makes extra cash on the side by walking dogs for rich people.

Jeongguk didn't think the job would stick, and it's only been a little under a month, but—he's surprisingly good at it. He's no dog whisperer like his friend Taehyung, whose dog Yeontan knows tricks and commands and apparently basic Korean vocabulary, but he's good with dogs. He likes dogs.

So today's walk started off like any other. Most of his clients are one-time jobs. He'd assumed, when he got out of bed at 6 a.m. to make it to the house on time, that this would be much of the same. The house was all the way out in fucking Gangnam, which led Jeongguk to believe that the fancy-ass mansion where his walk began belonged to some old geezer who works for a hedge fund. Someone old, or someone married. The kind of rich person who looks down on menial tasks such as walking their own dog and hires someone else to do it for them.

That's been most of his clientele, anyhow. Not that Jeongguk has room to judge; this is how he's paying the bills, after all. He should be thankful that people are too lazy or too busy being rich that they can't care for their own animals, right?

This client's dog is named Min Holly. A little poodle the color of cattails, spunky and energetic. Jeongguk's instructions were to let himself in through the back door with the key in the lockbox, the passcode to which had been texted to him via the dog walking app. All super simple and par for the course.

He takes Holly on a nice long morning walk around the neighborhood. Holly is a model canine citizen. He doesn't object to being taken from the house by a total stranger, doesn't stop or whine or try to attack any dogs also walking around. Basically a dream, on the scale of bad to good dog walks. The only hiccup in the entire walk is when Holly, a spirited little pup who doesn't appear to know commands like Yeontan does, trots directly into a puddle of mud. And then jumps all over Jeongguk when he tries to get him out of the puddle. But it's just mud. Nothing Jeongguk can't wash off Holly's paws and his shirt when they get back to the house.

The only flaw in this logic is that Jeongguk forgot said dog had an owner.

Well, that's not entirely true. He didn't forget. It's just that of all the dogs he's walked, he's rarely, if ever, met the owners. Sometimes they want to meet him before the first walk, put a face to the name of the person in charge of their pet. But most of the time Jeongguk comes

and goes like any other help would in a giant seven figure salary household. He'd assumed that Holly's owner would be at work, or off doing whatever it is that rich people do.

This is where the stupid part comes in. Pay close attention.

Jeongguk unlocks the door and carries Holly over the threshold, careful to wash Holly's tiny muddy paws in the sink before setting him on the floor to run as he pleases.

Then, because he's a fucking moron, Jeongguk pulls off his muddied white T-shirt and rinses it off real quick. He has class right after this, and he didn't think to bring a change of clothes with him. Just a quick wash to get these mud stains out—

And that's when the kitchen door opens.

Jeongguk freezes for several reasons.

1. he's shirtless.
2. he's shirtless in a stranger's house, a house he did not expect anyone to be home at.
3. he recognizes the person in the doorway.

So Jeongguk sits, completely still, deer in the headlights. No, not deer, because deer actually breathe. Jeongguk is roadkill. Roadkill in the headlights. Possum playing dead on the side of the road except when you look closer it's actually really dead because AgustD just walked into the kitchen.

AgustD, as in the famous rapper who started in an idol group that never debuted, who worked his way up into production through the underground hip-hop scene.

As in, the massive musician and producing mogul who's won more awards under the age of twenty-five than Jeongguk could ever dream of and is so rich it's actually disgusting.

As in, the cool hip-hop artist slash music producer slash genius who is, on top of all those things, so unbelievably hot.

As in the guy who just walked into the kitchen, cracking a gigantic yawn, eyes barely open as he shuffles to the cabinet. He doesn't seem to know that Jeongguk is even there.

His pajama pants are zebra print. Which Jeongguk only notices

because he is trying very very hard not to stare at the upper half of his body, which is very very not clothed.

Unable to breathe or move, Jeongguk watches in this weird mix of utter horror and fascination—like when you're super crossfaded at a party and have just realized in the midst of a euphoric haze that you're actually about to throw the fuck up. He watches as the youngest music producer mogul of the decade stretches up on his tippy-toes, grunting a bit, and gropes about the uppermost cabinet, and comes back down again with a box of cherry Pop-Tarts. Watches as he tears into a package with his teeth, takes a bite out of one, chewing rather enthusiastically, and turns.

The Pop-Tart falls to the floor. For some reason, it's that, plus making some serious eye contact with AgustFuckingD, that makes Jeongguk yelp like he's seen a ghost.

"Um," says AgustD, a.k.a. Famous Rapper, a.k.a. Jeongguk's biggest sexual awakening.

"Good morning!" Jeongguk says, trying for cheeriness, but his voice overshoots and somehow makes it even worse.

"Hi. What the fuck."

Say something. Jeongguk, trying to break through to the thought processor of his brain with a battering ram, comes up with the best thing he can.

"Holly pooped once and peed three times."

It takes a another moment of horrified pause before Jeongguk's brain finally allows him to come to terms that that's maybe the dumbest thing that anyone has ever said in the history of forever. Who the fuck meets their celebrity crush and talks about poop? Apparently Jeongguk does.

"Dog walker," AgustD says, like the thought only just occurred to him, but his posture doesn't loosen. In fact, the awkwardness of this moment only seems to increase with every passing second. "Right. Forgot you were coming this morning."

"Right. Well. I did indeed do the thing. The thing known as dog walking," says Jeongguk, and then, picking up on the rhyme, makes a DJ record-scratching noise. A weak and pathetic "whicka whicka whack" that peters off awkwardly as he realizes that it's tied for

number one stupidest thing he's ever done.

"You, uh, you might want to put your shirt on before you head out."

And that's when Jeongguk realizes that he's been been standing there, also shirtless, clutching his damp white t-shirt like some kind of porno actor, staring at AgustD like some kind of pervert weirdo, for a solid few minutes.

Jeongguk flushes warm, down to his toes. "Right. I'm so sorry."

"Did Holly behave?"

It's not a stern question, but Jeongguk literally breaks out into a sweat, nodding frantically. "He was a model citizen. A perfect pup."

"Right. And your name?"

He's looking at Jeongguk very seriously, and only then does it occur to Jeongguk not only how embarrassing this is, but also how extremely inappropriate. Especially for a dog walking service that prizes itself on discretion and professionalism, and apparently caters to celebrities. He probably wants Jeongguk's name so he can call the agency that hired Jeongguk get him fired.

Which like, he probably deserves that. Jeongguk's the one who took his clothes off in a famous producer's private mansion, so.

He sighs and, for the first time since the Pop-Tart fell, looks Music Industry King AgustD in the eye.

"Jeongguk. My name is Jeon Jeongguk."

yoongi

SJDJSJAKAKXJCNDALALZK

hoseok

????????? u okay bruh

yoongi

IM GONNA FKCUFING

WGAT THE F RCUK

hoseok

hyung are you being kidnapped

did the sasaengs finally get to u
keysmash once for Yes twice for No

yoongi

NO SHUT U;PG OD

hoseok

r u gonna keep spouting gibberish or

yoongi

THE FUCKING DOG WALKER WAS SHIRTLESS?

hoseok

oooookay you've lost me completely bc WUT

yoongi

I????????!!1!!!

hoseok

START FROM THE BEGINNING BITCH
USE YOUR WORDS

yoongi

FINE. GOD

ok so u know how I've been feeling really bad abt working late so much and leaving holly so abandoned and alone and traumatized

hoseok

you are literally a good dog owner and holly is fine but yes go on

yoongi

an y ways

i hired a dog walker through that app u mentioned, right? the one you use for mickey?

only I forgot that I did that, or at least forgot that i had scheduled a walk for holly this morning

so I come in the kitchen and there's some SHIRTLESS RANDO
STANDING THERE IN MY KITCHEN

SO MY QUESTION IS

DOES THIS DOG WALKING APP DOUBLE AS A STRIPPER-GRAM
SERVICE HOBI BC WHAT THE H E L L

hoseok

LMAOOOOOOO WHAT THE FUCJ THIS IS HYSTERICAL

yoongi

apparently he had picked up holly at one point and gotten mud on his shirt and decided to wash it in the sink
it was like watching a wet t-shirt contest
it's burned in my brain

hoseok

i honestly cannot tell if you're saying that he was hot or super uggo

yoongi

hoseok he was literally the Hottest man i have Ever seen

hoseok

wow

hotter than your husband Dwayne the Rock Johnson?

yoongi

like what Dwayne and i have is special?

but yes

in the unlikely event of the rock's passing

the dog walker would be the hottest man I have Ever seen

though it was honestly impossible to tell bc like i was distracted wow

he was so hot i honestly have to go lay down

hoseok

cool sowhen are you gonna see him again

yoongi

...never, if I can

hoseok

HYUNG

THIS IS LIKE THE OPENING TO A ROMANTIC COMEDY

/YOUR/ ROMANTIC COMEDY

DONT TELL ME YOURE NOT GONNA SEE HIM AGAIN

yoongi

i mean he PROBABLY thinks I'm a weird perv for staring and has already quit being a dog walker and relocated himself to GUAM for all intents and purposes

hoseok

srsly what is it with you and guam

or.....or he's just as mortified as you are

yoongi

YOURE OUT OF YOUR DAMN MIND

but on the real
he was so
he was really handsome

hoseok

wow how surprisingly PG of you

yoongi

he was so pretty
i would have noticed him even without the washboard abs
but as it is i've died and will not return

hoseok

yeah but you're //rapper voice// S-U-G-A AKA AGUSTD
so I'm sure it was a pleasant surprise for him to see u too ;))))

“Quick question, let’s call it an interest poll,” says Jeongguk, upon entering the living room of his apartment, “does potentially assaulting your client count as grounds to get fired from a dog walking company?”

“I’m sorry WHAT,” Jimin shouts from the kitchen.

Jeongguk makes a noise that he’s sure is slightly more than theatrical, and flings himself onto the The Chonk. The Chonk is the gigantic bean bag that sits in their living room. And it is, indeed, giant. With a fifteen foot diameter, it serves as what would be the couch, if Jimin and Taehyung had bothered to purchase a couch upon moving in, which—they did not. They bought The Chonk instead.

“Can’t we just call it The Beanbag?”

“Look at that thing, Jeongguk. Look at how big it is. Is it not chonky?”

“Sure, but can we not call it something else.”

“No.”)

The Chonk, as much as Jeongguk hates to admit it, is kind of perfect for their apartment. It’s comfy and homey and it’s impossible to sit on with someone without somehow comfortably cuddling. It means lots of puppy piles on bad days.

It is also, thankfully, perfect for flinging oneself onto and screaming

bloody murder.

“You assaulted a dog?” Taehyung pokes his head out from his and Jimin’s room.

“Mmmpfhhrgh,” Jeongguk moans piteously into The Chonk.

A beat of silence, and then every molecule of oxygen is pummeled out of Jeongguk’s body as Kim Taehyung throws himself on top of Jeongguk. His best and most affectionate point of attack.

“Please don’t kill him,” Jimin says, quietly clambering onto the Chonk to join them. “I want to hear the story of how Jeongguk assaulted a dog.”

“Okay, stop, I didn’t assault a dog,” Jeongguk says, struggling to lift his head, seeing as Taehyung is locked onto him like a barnacle. He’s also biting Jeongguk’s shoulder through his shirt which—okay. Jeongguk elbows him in the ribs until Taehyung rolls off, wincing slightly.

Then, at an alarmed look from Jimin, Jeongguk adds, “I didn’t! Seriously.”

“Okay. Mind telling me what *did* happen? You were at that house in Gangnam, right?”

“Yeah. You were right about it being a celebrity, by the way,” Jeongguk says, and then relays the rest of the story, cringing as Jimin and Taehyung’s eyes go wide as saucers.

“Huh,” Taehyung strokes his chin, once Jeongguk has finished and re-buried his face in the Chonk. “That doesn’t sound like he hates you. It sounds more like he instantly fell in love with you and wants to have nine babies?”

“Trust me, it could not have been a more uncomfortable moment if I tried. He hates me. And he’s going to get me fired.”

“Jeongguk. Sweetie. This sounds like a dick appointment.”

“It wasn’t a dick appointment.”

“Okay I get that but it *sounds like*—”

“Are you going to offer a helpful suggestion here or am I going to suffer forever?”

yoongi > > > **seokjin**

you're good at flirting, right?

seokjin

excuse me? what kind of question is this? do you have the wrong number? because you BETTER not be asking me, the kim seokjin, /IF/ i happen to be good at flirting.

yoongi

never mind forget i asked

seokjin

this wouldn't have anything to do with the fact that hoseok was cackling at his phone a few hours ago ago would it?

yoongi

bitch it might be

seokjin

if its advice youre looking for you've probably come to the wrong place

"Clearly the only option is expatriation. The embassy is going to deport me."

Jimin tips his head to the side, like he's not quite sure what he's hearing. "That's not how embassies work? What do you think embassies are for, Jeongguk?"

"He's cute though, right? AgustD. He's the one that's got the whole angry twink thing going on, right?"

"I didn't happen to notice," Jeongguk lies through his teeth. "I was too busy signing my last will and testament, remind me to check next time."

Taehyung pouts. "Fine, no need to be cranky about it."

"I'm not. Sorry. I'm just," Jeongguk lets out a tremendous sigh. "So obviously fired. I've barely been on the job for a month and I already screwed it up."

There is a brief pause, wherein Jeongguk can feel their gazes on him,

where he can sense the telepathic conversation of how to take things from here. Jimin and Taehyung, though not perfect, are best at knowing what Jeongguk needs. When he needs to be coddled and comforted and hugged and when he needs distance so he can wring out the stress from his own body like a washcloth.

Jimin hums, contemplative. "Hm. You know what will cheer you up?"

"The sweet embrace of death?"

"Dick. Lots of dick. We're gonna search Tinder for you."

"I don't have Tinder."

"You do as of," Jimin's fingers fly over his phone screen for a brief moment, "now."

"Great. Well, I don't need dick. I need a job, because I'm going to be fired literally any minute now. You think I should just quit before they can fire me? That seems like the smart choice."

"We can multitask. You job search, we'll dick hunt."

"What are we calling this?" asks Taehyung, tucking his chin over Jimin's shoulder to look at his phone screen. "'Quest for Dick'? 'Atlantis: The Lost Dick'? We need a name."

"'Quest for Dick' sounds good," Jimin agrees, and then they lapse into silence, scrolling through Jimin's phone and thereby Jeongguk's Tinder profile, brows furrowed in concentration.

Jeongguk stares up at the ceiling, trying to turn the churning waters of anxiety into something productive. If it's going to be a storm in his head he might as well try to get some damn electricity out of it. He wracks his brains. He can always try and get a job on campus. The library is always hiring, even if they don't typically hire seniors on their last semester. Then there's the cafe with the milkshakes, though Jeongguk would prefer not to work in a place where he sees classmates every day. He likes the solitude of dog walking. Helps him clear his head and get in some cardio while he's at it. Maybe mowing lawns? Is that a thing people still do? But he lives in a concrete building and wouldn't even know how to go about marketing himself as a lawn mower.

He can feel the anxiety swelling in his chest, the *what do i do what the fuck am i supposed to do*, but is interrupted by a distinct barking sound

from his phone. A notification from the dog walking app.

Prepared for the worst, Jeongguk unlocks his phone.

min holly has requested you for a walk tomorrow! do you accept?

“You’ve got to be fucking kidding me,” Jeongguk blurts.

Taehyung and Jimin look up from where they’re swiping through matches on Jeongguk’s Tinder account, peeking over his shoulder.

Jimin screeches. Taehyung punches the air and crows, “MY BABY’S GETTING MARRIED. YES.”

“That is *not* what’s happening,” Jeongguk says defensively, his ears already turning red as his friends shout over him. “Right? Surely he meant to report me to the company for abuse of power.”

“Did you kidnap his dog?”

“No.”

“He’s not going to report you. He probably just thought you did a thorough job.”

“Yeah.” Taehyung grins salaciously. “A real thorough job. Walkin’ that dog.”

“IT WAS NOT AT A DICK APPOINTMENT,” Jeongguk yells. “And I cannot possibly show up at this guy’s house again. He’s—”

“Super hot?”

“Super rich?”

“Super rich and hot and super single according to the latest tabloids?”

“Super duper fucking gay?”

“Super out of my league!” Jeongguk squeals, cover his face. “God. I don’t even. This isn’t even the issue! I need the money.”

“I’m still firmly pro-Operation: Amateur Porn for cash. Just saying.”

“I’m *not* filming a threesome with you and Jimin, you fucking asshole.”

“We need to complete our trio,” Taehyung pouts. “We could call the tape *The Three Ami-Gays*. It’d be great.”

“Look, even if this guy had a total aneurysm and hired me again, I can’t exactly show up tomorrow.”

“Why not?”

“Because he’s seen me indecent!” Jeongguk hisses. “I can’t see him ever again! I’d die of embarrassment!”

There must be something in Jeongguk’s tone—the exact breathlessness of it. Tae and Jimin stop with the jokes, sharing a brief look before they crowd a bit closer to Jeongguk.

“Hey, don’t worry. I’m sure it’s not a big deal.”

“It is to me,” Jeongguk says miserably.

“Mm.” Tae makes a sympathetic humming noise, strokes Jeongguk’s hair. A sense of relaxation ripples over Jeongguk’s skin, like someone cracked an egg over his head, a cool oozing calm.

“It’s fine,” Jeongguk says, after a deep breath. “It’s cool. It’s chill. I’ll just quit.”

“So, yes to the porno?”

“No to the porno. I just. I don’t have to do this to myself. This kind of physical torture is not even worth it.”

“That’s the spirit!” Jimin says.

“I’ll get another part-time job somewhere. Figure something out with my class schedule. I can float for a bit, right?”

“Tell ‘em baby, you’re a strong independent woman who don’t need no man!”

“Yeah, you’re right,” Jeongguk says, a new wind beneath his wings. “I’m not some broke bitch. I don’t need the money that bad.”

Jeongguk's a broke bitch and he needs the money that bad.

That being said, he definitely waffles back and forth on whether or not to take a fucking Zoloft before he goes, just to make sure he's chill and calm and not going to freak out and yell about poop again.

But it's a precaution he doesn't need to end up taking. When he shows up at 8 a.m. to walk Holly, AgustD is actually waiting for him.

"Oh—," Jeongguk stops short. "Hi."

"Hello."

"Um." That's the primary vocabulary word of the day. Great job, Jeongguk. "I'm so sorry. About yesterday."

"Please," AgustD waves his hand in the air as if to clear it. His fingers are long, a bit red and wind-chapped along the knuckles. Fine-boned. *Pianist's hands*, Jeongguk notes absently. "I'm the idiot who forgot that I had hired a dog walker and went wandering around my place shirtless."

"I know, but—it was so inappropriate of me to take my shirt off—"

"Holly jumped on you, right?" At Jeongguk's nod, AgustD shakes his head. "He gets overexcited, especially when rain puddles are involved. Please, no need to apologize. I really appreciate the help, actually."

"I was really surprised to see you," Jeongguk admits, trying not to sound too awestruck and failing. "I mean like, you're AgustD."

"Please. You have seen me shirtless and know that I like cherry Pop-Tarts." Then AgustD grins, and his smile is wide and a little bit gummy and nothing at all like Jeongguk was expecting, he's usually so scowly in his music videos.

"You can call me Yoongi."

A delighted laugh threatens to bubble up from his belly but Jeongguk clamps it between his teeth. Yoongi. Yoongi of the cherry Pop-Tarts and record-breaking fame. Min Yoongi of the tiny nut-brown poodle.

Speak of the devil, Holly comes scampering across the tile, nails click-clacking to announce his entrance. Jeongguk watches—amazed—as Yoongi crouches down and begins talking to Holly in aegyo, making a pouty face and letting Holly lick at his chin.

Jesus fuck, thinks Jeongguk, with the sudden urge to throw something, or maybe chest-press a vehicle, *that's so fucking cute*.

"I really am sorry I gave you such a fright yesterday," Yoongi says, straightening with Holly in his arms. "I was also barely awake, so if I came across as cranky it's purely because I hadn't had my coffee."

"Shouldn't I be apologizing?"

"I forgot that you were even coming by. Figured Holly was sleeping somewhere. There's a lot of bedrooms and he has claimed at least five of them."

That makes Jeongguk smile, even as he's fighting against a wall of anxiety threatening to flatten him.

"Well, let's try this again, then. Because I think my dog had a good time the other day and he's a particular judge of character."

Yoongi brings Holly over to set him on the ground so Jeongguk can fix his harness and leash on him, and when he bends over Jeongguk can see the undercut of his silvery-white hair, the dark vee at the nape of his neck. Jeongguk's fingers twitch.

The way Jeongguk sees it—there's only two ways this can end. Heartbreak or unemployment.

By the end of the second walk, he's pretty sure that he's a little bit in love with Min Yoongi and a lot in love with Min Holly.

Min Holly is a good dog. He likes attention and he hates being ignored and everyone on their walk always stops to tell him how cute he is and Jeongguk hasn't had a dog since he was a kid but if he did he'd want it to be a dog like Holly.

Not that Jeongguk's biased.

(You'll never have proof, but Jeongguk may or may not have a horrifying number of Min Holly pics saved on his phone. This one time mid-walk, Holly chased a butterfly through the park and Jeongguk made a noise like a dying walrus, it was that adorable.)

He and Yoongi are on friendly enough terms that now, when Jeongguk lets himself in through the sliding glass door of Yoongi's

mansion, Holly comes galloping toward him. When Holly runs, his tiny legs fly so fast he looks like a goddamn racehorse. It's the best thing in the entire world.

"Hey best friend!" Jeongguk doesn't even second guess himself before he's crouching down as well, soothing his thumbs gently over the thin skin of Holly's soft ears, where he knows he likes to be rubbed. "Hey best friend, what's up? Ready for another adventure today?"

This is how they greet one another every single walk now. Because it only took Jeongguk two (2) walks to realize that this dog was the only creature he could trust in this world.

("Excuse me," shouts Taehyung indignantly, thumbs clicking on the Xbox controller. "I thought I was your best friend!")

"Sorry, Holly is infinitely more loyal than you will ever be. Plus he doesn't suck at playing Overwatch."

"He's a dog! He can't play Overwatch!"

"True, but that doesn't change the fact that I'm wiping the floor with your ass right now," says Jeongguk, as he obliterates Taehyung's remaining lives.)

Yoongi must find the whole "best friend" thing kind of weird, because he always has a coughing fit and gets red in the face whenever Jeongguk says it, like he's covering up a laugh.

Speak of the devil, it goes without saying that Min Yoongi is a good guy. He is somehow nothing like Jeongguk would expect Min Yoongi to be like—when he'd imagined the enigmatic and charismatic figure of AgustD. When he speaks, his voice is rough but somehow soothing. Shoulders wide but sits so small. He's a basket full of contradictions, and Jeongguk likes picking each one out, turning it over his hands like a puzzle piece, dragging his fingers around the edge, trying to figure out where it fits in the whole of him.

By the end of the second walk, he knows that Yoongi is the only person he's ever met who likes to eat Raisin Bran. He knows that Yoongi is incapable of talking to Holly in anything that isn't a babyish voice.

By the end of the third, Yoongi has Jeongguk's number. Asks if Jeongguk would be up for doing double walks on days where Yoongi is basically chained to the recording booth. Jeongguk nods, hardly

able to believe that this is happening, and Yoongi's rewarding smile is just So Much to handle. Too much.

For every walk Jeongguk takes Holly on, he's rewarded with these little bits of Yoongi. Yoongi's not always around when Jeongguk watches Holly, but when he is he always makes a point to talk to Jeongguk, come downstairs when he hears the door open. One day, there's bagels on the counter, and Yoongi invites Jeongguk to stay for breakfast before class.

Yoongi isn't often there when Jeongguk comes to fetch Holly but sometimes he is when Jeongguk gets back. Either on his way out the door or just barely waking up, shuffling around the kitchen and groping blindly for the coffee maker. Yoongi in the morning squints like a mole in daylight, navigates his space by feel rather than sight, like he can't quite look things head-on until he's had at least one sip of black coffee.

Then, one morning, Jeongguk gets there and Yoongi is sitting in the kitchen, eyes wide open, fully dressed.

Jeongguk blinks. "Do I have the wrong time for Holly's walk?"

Yoongi shakes his head, the corners of his mouth curling shyly. "Nah. I was actually going to ask if I could accompany you, actually? I wanted to show you some cool spots around the neighborhood that Holly likes to swing by."

Jeongguk glances nervously at Holly, whose butt immediately begins wagging at the eye contact. He doesn't *look* like Jeongguk's been emotionally traumatizing him on the walks, but what does Jeongguk know?

"Oh," he says. "Um. Sure, I guess. But don't you have like, super important music stuff to do?"

"Nah. I've just been fucking around in the studio. I could use the sunlight."

"Ah, I see. The famous AgustD procrastinates. Wow. Stars really *are* just like us."

"Shut up," says Yoongi, but it's belied by the way Holly's prancing around him like a show pony.

So Yoongi joins them on the walk through the quiet neighborhood.

Despite this, Holly seems firmly settled and comfortable with Jeongguk holding the lead rather than Yoongi. Gets ahead every few feet and checks over his shoulder with a shrewd gaze, like he's expecting Jeongguk to abandon him and makeout with Yoongi if Holly so much as looks away for too long.

Then AgustD, music industry mogul, abruptly stops and points at a bush on the corner of the block across from the park and says, "This is Holly's favorite bush. It's very important that you stop by this bush every walk."

"Holly takes his bushes very seriously, does he?"

Yoongi nods, then points across the street. "He also likes to circulate the dog park, but not go inside. He prefers the park across from the pre-school."

"Right. Of course."

They wander for longer than necessary. Holly does his business on several fire hydrants of choice and still they wander. Jeongguk doesn't dare suggest they turn around.

Then, abruptly, though Jeongguk thought they were past the stop-n-point part of the neighborhood tour, he stops again.

"Do you like boba?" AgustD asks, and Jeongguk really has got to start thinking of him as Min Yoongi if he's going to keep this up. These gentle and unconventional and not-at-all-AgustD-like questions.

(AgustD wears big rings and drives big cars and swears loud and raps fast and when he looks you in the eyes through the camera everything about him bleeds swag and cockiness and condescension to the haters.

Min Yoongi wears a soft grey scarf that his mother gave to him before he came to Seoul, talks quiet, talks slow, and when he looks you in the eye—even behind a mask and beneath a bucket hat—he looks like he's really listening to you, like it matters, like he's filing every word away for future reference. There's a difference.)

"I like boba." Jeongguk nods, suppressing a small smile. "I'm a little surprised, though. I've never seen you drinking anything but those americanos in interviews."

He realizes half a second later how utterly creepy that sounds, like he spends every waking minute combing the internet for YouTube clips,

but Yoongi doesn't seem to notice. "It's true, I do love my americanos. But I've recently become addicted to boba and this cute little shop opened around the corner where no one recognizes me and I can't stop going."

Then he sneaks a sly glance in Jeongguk's direction, a playful tilt to his pouty mouth as he says, "Don't sneak my dark secret to the tabloids, okay?"

It's so cute. Yoongi leads Jeongguk and Holly to the shop, where he orders a passionfruit tea for himself and sucks up the boba, chews quietly but enthusiastically. Smiles at Jeongguk with his eyes over the rim of his cup. Jeongguk finds himself leaning forward at the table outside the cafe, Holly's leash tangled about his legs, trying to sip at his almond milk tea but also trying not to choke on it every time they make eye contact.

Yoongi asks about Jeongguk's college major and listens when he talks. When Jeongguk asks questions of his own, expecting polite yet clipped answers, Yoongi vaguely but lengthily describes the new music he's working on, which makes Jeongguk feel special and mature and important.

It's the very definitive sensation of tipping. The teeter and wobble right before the crash.

Don't be ridiculous, he tells himself, *you barely met this guy*.

But then, when they're done, and have thrown out their cups, Yoongi claps his hands and starts talking to Holly again, lifting him into his arms with a simple *come to daddy*.

And yeah, Jeongguk just barely met this guy outside of obsessively listening to his music. But he swears that if Yoongi looked at him the right way, asked in the right tone of voice, Jeongguk would throw himself off the nearest bridge, backflip off the nearest ramp, bleach himself bald all over again. He'd do it if Yoongi asked him to.

So maybe it's ridiculous.

So maybe Jeongguk doesn't care.

yoongi
hey kid

jeongguk
hey hyung!

yoongi
big favor to ask
i've got a music video to shoot out of town this weekend
would you be willing to house sit with holly?
usually i take him to doggy day care but you're so good with him i
feel like he'd be happier with you
before you answer i want to add that you can literally do whatever
you want in the house, help yourself to whatever's in the fridge, i'll
leave behind money so you can order food for yourself, all expenses
paid
you're also welcome to use the jacuzzi
and the bowling alley
just no parties

jeongguk
aw damn i already sent an invite out for the rager :(
loljk
you had me at bowling alley
you don't have to pay me though. like, outside of the walks

yoongi
i absolutely do
you're doing me a huge favor
you're sure it's not too much? i know you have class and homework

jeongguk
i mean yeah but it's chill! holly's laidback, i can go to class and still
make sure he gets his walks in. campus is just a quick bus ride. plus i
can do my homework there

yoongi
okay.
thank you, seriously.
come over friday before class?

jeongguk
sounds good!

“It is not a date!” Jeongguk shouts, batting at Jimin and Taehyung like mosquitos. “Stop trying to put sex toys into my duffle bag!”

“How about condoms? I feel like condoms are basic common sense. He asked you to stay over!”

“Yeah, because I’m *babysitting Holly*. Yoongi’s not even going to be home! He’s working.”

“Ha ha,” Taehyung chuckles, nudges Jimin in the side. “Condom sense, get it?”

“Nice one, babe,” says Jimin.

“See, this is why the dog is my best friend.” Jeongguk glares, and tackles Jimin to the floor before he can plant the sex leash.

yoongi > > > **seokjin, hoseok & namjoon**

is this a date

this isn’t a date right

seokjin

are you asking if an employed dog walker staying at your house while you’re not even there is a date?

hoseok

seriously hyung when was the last time you got laid

yoongi

NOT ALL OF US ARE IN HAPPY COMPLETELY FUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

namjoon

please don’t yell at my boyfriend or my boyfriend’s boyfriend, thank you.

yoongi

im sorry i’m just stressed

idk how to like. show this guy i like him other than to like

keep hiring him to walk my dog?

but i’m worried that that sends the message that i want to give him money and like yes while i would gladly give him all my money in a heartbeat im not necessarily looking for a sugar baby

hoseok

hyung don't worry

you are nowhere near ugly enough that you have to bribe younger
hotter people to have sex with you

seokjin

idk the whole gremlin vibe he's got going on doesn't exactly give him
a huge sex appeal

namjoon

so this definitely isn't like a hookup kind of crush

this is like a write a whole concept album about him breaking your
heart kind of crush, huh?

yoongi

i s2g every time he accepts my walk requests my heart explodes

i hear the notification sound for the app and i break out in a sweat
is this millennial romance?

seokjin

.....

hoseok

.....

namjoon

good god you really do need to get laid.

True to Yoongi's word, there is indeed a jacuzzi and a bowling alley.
There is also a gigantic bed in the guest bedroom that Yoongi leads
Jeongguk to, but the bed is somehow bigger than any bed has any
right to be. It makes him uncomfortable just looking at it. He doubts
he'll move beyond the couch.

Yoongi gives Jeongguk a quick tour of the house, leaves Jeongguk the
numbers of his security team and his management if anything
happens, as well as the vet. He pushes a disgusting amount of cash
into Jeongguk's hand "for food," like Jeongguk's going to be eating
gold nuggets for dinner or something. Then he's crouching down to
Min Holly Height, staring his dog in the eye rather intensely and
saying, "Holly I would die and kill for you without hesitation be safe I
love you" before smacking a quick kiss to Holly's head, grabbing his
suitcase, and heading for the door.

Usually Holly is morning-only walks with Jeongguk, but Jeongguk walks Holly morning and night for three days straight, and doesn't hear from Yoongi at all. It isn't insulting—even if Jeongguk is a little bummed. Yoongi is shooting a music video, after all, he's probably not anywhere near his phone. He sends a few pictures of Holly, though, because he thinks it'll cheer Yoongi up if he is stressed or tired.

Mostly, he spends the day catching up on his favorite dramas and doing a bit of homework. He doesn't sleep in the gargantuan bed that Yoongi told him he could, because the giant squishy couch in the den is far more comfortable, Holly tucking into Jeongguk's belly like a little space heater, curled up like a cinnamon roll.

That's the best part of it, honestly. The hot tub is fun and the bowling alley is neat but mostly it's just getting to chill with Holly. Jeongguk thinks there's probably something concerning about hanging out with a dog. But Holly is the *coolest* dog, and also his best friend, so Jeongguk doesn't mind being alone in this big slightly intimidating mansion because Holly is there to talk to.

"The thing is," Jeongguk strokes Holly one more time. They're both splayed out on the carpet starfish-style, limbs spread wide, bellies up. "Like I *know* he's not an asshole and doesn't care that I'm not famous and stuff but also—how do I possibly live up to someone who has dated famous people? Or, is on the level of social royalty that they *can*?"

Holly stretches, makes an odd groaning yawn noise with a very specific tone of grumpiness to it.

"Yeah," sighs Jeongguk, turning back to the ceiling. "I don't want him to date other people either."

Yoongi returns Sunday evening, drags himself through the door, deadweight, slides down to the floor. Holly is ecstatic, barking and yipping and absolutely demanding cuddles. Jeongguk's pretty sure he imagines the look that Holly gives him over Yoongi's elbow, one that seems to say, *come here and get your cuddles too, bitch*.

But Jeongguk loiters in the kitchen. Yoongi looks a bit ragged, there's residual makeup making his eyes stand out. Product in his hair, flat ironed a little.

"How was the shoot?"

"Good. I'm dead tired, though." Yoongi rubs a hand over the back of

his neck, wincing. “How was the most perfect puppy in the world?”

“An angel, as always. Chased three squirrels at the park and wooed several old ladies who told me he was the most beautiful dog they’ve ever seen.”

“That’s my baby,” Yoongi smiles, eyes closed, tired and pretty looking.

Jeongguk stares longer than is socially acceptable. He really needs to leave, but Yoongi is currently sitting against the only exit route.

“Are you hungry? I’m starved.”

“Oh, a little,” lies Jeongguk, who is literally always hungry. “I was just going to eat at home though.”

“Nonsense. I owe you dinner.”

“Hyung,” Jeongguk whines. “You’ve paid me enough.”

“Do you like lamb skewers? I think I’m craving lamb skewers.”

Which is how Jeongguk ends up on Yoongi’s couch in the den, simultaneously more relaxed and tense than he’s ever been in his entire life, a small mountain of lamb skewers piled onto a plate between them.

Yoongi flicks through a few channels and then they somehow end up watching old music videos from the 90s on Youtube, laughing over the outrageous fashion and cheesy effects as they eat. After the food is gone, Jeongguk takes out his sketchpad and finishes up a few drawings for his Monday morning class, lets Yoongi pick a movie, smiling to himself when he settles on *Tazza*. Jeongguk could point out that he spotted the movie in Yoongi’s massive Blu-Ray collection, but it’s kind of fun to watch him grumble about the obnoxious number of commercial breaks, one-sided dialogue and movie commentary with Holly as it plays.

When Jeongguk emerges from his focus stupor some time later, the TV is now playing some early 2000s rom-com. Beside him, Yoongi and Holly are fast asleep.

He watches the bluish light from the TV flicker over Yoongi’s features. The soft pout of his mouth, lashes a dark smudge against his cheek, Holly curled up on his tummy. He’s wearing shorts, which Jeongguk’s never seen him do, legs pale and skinny, knees knobby, all parts

vulnerable, all parts lovely.

Jeongguk sinks into sleep like quicksand, struggling to keep surfaced, eyes on Yoongi, until he goes. It's so comfortable, curled up on the plush couch. It's so comfortable, being with him. Jeongguk sinks into sleep like quicksand, struggling to keep surfaced, eyes on Yoongi, until he goes.

When he wakes it's dawn, and there's a blanket tucked around him. Soft fleece. Yoongi and Holly are nowhere to be seen, so Jeongguk leaves quietly.

He rolls into his apartment rumpled and very clearly in yesterday's clothes. Taehyung and Jimin raise their eyebrows in unison.

"Can it," Jeongguk groans, and walks off to his room.

"I just don't understand what the problem is," says Jimin, the dark rectangles of his eyebrows pursed cutely together as he frowns. He's bent over the stir-fry but his eyes are on Jeongguk, who's been sitting at the kitchen table complaining about Min Yoongi for an entire hour.

"Of course you don't. You met Taehyung and like—24 hours later he was your boyfriend. You guys didn't even make it through the first date before you were banging in the bathroom."

"I have *never* fucked someone in a bathroom," Jimin says, then, at Jeongguk's shrewd expression, he mumbles sheepishly, "Handjobs don't count as fucking."

"Cool, well, while that may have worked out great for you, I operate on a slightly less horrifying fuck-or-die level."

"All I'm saying is that there is *no* reason you should not be swooning in Yoongi's arms and like, looking at beachfront properties for your winter wedding already. That's all. You're being willfully idiotic about this."

"That's not fair," Jeongguk says, cutting Jimin with his eyes, but Jimin doesn't back down. Only flicks a dash of salt over his shoulder and into the pot and holds Jeongguk's gaze steadily. So Jeongguk slumps over the table further, goes boneless with his face against the linoleum. Peak brooding posture.

And it isn't fair. Jeongguk doesn't fall into relationships easily. Taehyung and Jimin are great, but they're also people who fall so easily into love. They don't overthink things or panic or wonder out 500 possible outcomes.

How are you still single is a fucking loaded question. His friends know better than to ask it, but Jeongguk still feels the implication of it whenever they talk about his dating life. He knows Jimin and Taehyung mean well, and only meant to encourage him to be happy with all this dating app and Quest for Dick nonsense. But it still feels like a slap to the face just the same. Like Jeongguk is incapable of doing these things for himself.

How is Jeongguk still single? It's not as if Jeongguk hasn't obsessed over the answer. Sometimes he takes pictures of himself that are ugly ones, and thinks that might be the reason. Other times he says the wrong thing, the awkward thing, and has to grapple for a solid minute under the *why the fuck did you say that you idiot*, and that feels like the reason.

Most of the time, he is just terrified that he lacks that spark. Not a spark with someone, but the ability to spark at all. Like he lacks the simple organic component, whatever it is, to be attractive and be desired. The thing in a person's eyes that calls out to you, says, *come close, talk to me*.

Jeongguk is perfectly good at maintaining strong friendships and easy acquaintances, but at the end of the day, he thinks he might just never be able to make it happen physically or romantically with another person. And not because he doesn't want it to. This wouldn't be a problem if he didn't want it. But he wants it very much. Lies awake at night sometimes, lets his mind play out romantic scenes in his head. Holding hands in a dark room, kisses beneath sunlight. Feeling close to someone and not having a complete freakout over it.

He wants to hold Yoongi's hand. Bring that hand up to his lips, brush his mouth over the knobby knuckles. Maybe also makeout for three hours straight until he can't feel his mouth.

But also the notion that he has to talk about his feelings to get to the Numb Mouth part of the relationship makes him want to sell all his worldly possessions and disappear into the forest like a witch or ancient spirit.

"You like him, right?" Jimin settles a hand on his shoulder.

“Obviously,” Jeongguk groans, holding still as Jimin digs his tiny thumbs into a knotted muscle in his neck. Stress headache. “The whole fact that he’s a talented musical genius is bad enough. To top it all off, he’s pretty and funny and he loves his dog so much he talks to him in a baby voice. He’s *soft*.”

“You sound so mad about this.”

“Oh I’m furious. What gives him the right.”

“So why don’t you ask him out? I asked Taetae out when we first met.”

“That’s different.”

“How is that different?”

“You and Taehyung are soulmates. It was always going to be you two.”

“And you and Yoongi aren’t?”

Jeongguk sits up now, feeling at least a little annoyed. “Min Yoongi? My *soulmate*? I’d have to have been a saint in a previous life. There’s no fucking way.”

“He’s just a person,” Jimin says soothingly, no longer arguing as he sits across from Jeongguk. He has the weirdest radar, like he knows when Jeongguk is willing and able to joke about something and when that something is not funny at all. “He’s just a person, just like you. Sure, he has billions of won and a mansion, but you have—”

“What,” Jeongguk says, daring Jimin to come up with something that’s supposed to measure up. “What do I have, Jimin?”

It’s not that he thinks Yoongi is better than him. But he is so much. His life feels like something Jeongguk’s not going to achieve for at least twenty more years. That sort of success and self-assured confidence in what he creates.

He doesn’t think Yoongi hates him. He just isn’t sure that he has anything that he’d really offer Yoongi in the long run. Substantially. Jeongguk is not trophy boyfriend material. He is not the arm candy you bring with you to industry parties. He clams up in front of strangers. He hides in bathrooms and plays games on his phone when he doesn’t know anyone at parties.

“You have a good and warm heart,” says Jimin. “Which is not a thing I imagine he sees a lot of in the celebrity circles. Anyone would be blessed to have such a heart. To care for it. But Jeongguk,” he reaches out and pats Jeongguk’s cheek, pinches it just the slightest bit. “You have to hand it over for that to happen.”

yoongi

i cant ask him out

namjoon

Hyung it’s three in the goddamn morning.

Why not.

yoongi

because what if he doesn’t like me back!!!!!!

i cant live through that!!!!

namjoon

Dude.

Yoongi

My friend and hyung who I much admire

You’re an internationally renowned producer.

You’ve performed in front of thousands on a solo stage.

You’ve met JAY-Z

yoongi

that was different

namjoon

FUCKFIGN HOW

yoongi

I DIDNT WANT TO SUCK JAY ZS DICK NOR GET MARRIED AND
SHOWER HIM IN GIFTS NAMJOON PLEASE FUCK OFF THIS IS NOT
THE SAME

seokjin > > > yoongi

namjoonah just dropped his phone on my face thus waking me up

so in case u were wondering why he never texted back, it’s bc i threw
his phone out the window

quit being a wimp please i am literally begging you

The reason he can't ask Yoongi out isn't an intimidation thing. Really. Jeongguk's not sitting here thinking about the billions of won and hundreds of awards that Yoongi is sitting on and thinking *he'll never want me*. Maybe he is a little, but not really. Not entirely.

He's just, not sure if Yoongi wants him.

Crushing on someone is not always fun and cutesy the way Jimin and Taehyung do it. Maybe it's easy and harmless for other people but it's not that way for Jeongguk. Crushing hurts. Crushing is staying up until 2 a.m. making a playlist they'll never listen to, crushing is playing out daydream scenarios in your head—dialogue, cinematic shots, the whole shebang—because the fantasy is easier to deal with than the reality.

Jeongguk in crush mode is wistful mixtapes and writing down all the things he'll never say. Singing softly to empty rooms. Jeongguk in crush mode is feeling lonelier than he's ever been able to express, curing up on the couch to re-watch *Goblin* for the millionth time and feeling his whole chest just *ache* with how much he doesn't want to be alone.

Because reality hurts sometimes. Plain and simple.

In daydreams and love songs, he can play the role of the one who gets the guy. In real life, it hurts to be that person. It hurts to expose yourself in that careful, painful, and brave way, to gently loose your heart from its cage and offer it up, every nerve ending raw and bleeding, and have someone say *i'm sorry, you must have mistaken me, i don't want this*.

He is terrified of hearing those words from Yoongi. The careful maybe-almost-friendship they've struck up is so precariously balanced. And, as shitty as it is, he really needs the money. Which means he needs this job. Which means he needs Yoongi to keep employing him.

If he asks Yoongi out, and makes things awkward, Yoongi might not ask Jeongguk back. Which would be so humiliating on its own. But also, Jeongguk would be sad to never see Holly again. He's become quite attached.

In the meantime, Jeongguk continues to walk Holly every other day at 9 a.m. sharp.

Or, tries to.

Jeongguk walks Holly with Yoongi. The weird thing of it is, Jeongguk walks with Yoongi and Holly more than he walks Just Holly. He's starting to think that he's either doing his job wrong and Yoongi doesn't trust him, or something else is afoot. Either way, he shouldn't be getting paid, because Yoongi's doing the same chore that he is. Jeongguk shouldn't be getting paid.

"I shouldn't be getting paid," he tells Yoongi one late morning.

Yoongi's mouth does this soft little part when he's surprised. There's always a glimpse of tongue, relaxed lips. It's horrible.

"And what's the logic behind that, you think?"

"In that you're paying me to walk your dog so you don't have to. I feel like it's a waste of your money."

"Trust me when I say that I have plenty of money to waste. But not a single won of it has been wasted on you." Yoongi nods, and then colors profusely, like he hears those words properly, the connotation of them. Like he's flustered over it.

Something lifts hopefully in Jeongguk's chest—an inhale, a dog scenting the air, a fucking sunrise between the slats of his ribs.

What breaks the dam on Jeongguk's impulse control? Funny you should ask.

It's oddly enough not the shirtless Min Yoongi, or sleeping Min Yoongi, or affectionate dog parent Min Yoongi. It's actually quite embarrassing, really, the final straw that tips the whole thing over. Spills out Jeongguk's feelings like a gutter after a flood.

It's a morning, just like any other morning. Jeongguk undoes Holly's leash at the gate and watches him scamper happily to the front door, legs kicking like a stallion's, only he's tiny so it's funny-looking. Jeongguk opens the sliding glass door.

Yoongi's sitting at a bar stool at the island of the kitchen. Two cherry Po-Tarts on his plate, a cup of coffee next to it. His glasses are thick rimmed and squarish and his silvery hair is all tufty looking, like he just got out of bed and came downstairs. He's got his iPad propped up

against a vase of flowers and is scrolling through the news, eyes flicking behind the lenses. None of these things are particularly new or out of the ordinary or striking. Just normal morning Min Yoongi. Jeongguk both hates and loves that he's familiar enough with this to know.

No, the thing that makes Jeongguk snap is the hand he's got propped under his chin. The way all his fingers lie flat against the shape of his cheek, all except one. Jeongguk stares at Yoongi's pinky finger, curled like a petal against his cheek. A bit crooked looking, like it just can't lay flat.

"Everything go alright?" Yoongi asks.

"Have lunch with me," blurts Jeongguk.

"I—," Yoongi blinks, frowns. "Okay? It's barely 9 a.m. though?"

"I mean...go out with me. By lunch, I mean a date. Like a very non-lunch lunch. We've grabbed food before so I just want to clarify that this is not an ordinary meal. The purpose of this event is not to have food. Or, it is. But it's romantic food."

Yoongi blinks sleepily, mouth parting that soft surprised way that makes Jeongguk wants to press against it.

"Jeongguk-ah, I would love to grab not-lunch lunch with you."

They go to an outdoor farmer's market.

Or rather, Holly takes them there. Like the little guy sees the way Jeongguk is gnawing at his lip or how Yoongi keeps touching his neck self-consciously as he talks and thinks *I'm taking matters into my own hands*. Holly leads the way, stopping every block or so to give Jeongguk this *look* over his shoulder. Like he sees right through to Jeongguk's gay panic and is judging him heftily for it.

Neither Yoongi nor Jeongguk has said very much since they left the house. But the bustle of the market seems to loosen both of their tongues. They pick up fresh bread and a wedge of cheese.

As they debate what kind of crackers to get, Yoongi's fingers brush his. It becomes a little game of tag between the aisles of the market. Yoongi settling a hand low on Jeongguk's back as he scoots by.

Jeongguk retaliating with a single finger dragged down the bare skin of his forearm, while he pretends to look at prices. Then Yoongi, leaning over Jeongguk's shoulder as Jeongguk loiters by the fruit stand, the lines of their bodies pushing together. Fingers quick as he plucks up a soft-looking mango, tips it into Jeongguk's basket without a word.

"That's going to get messy," Jeongguk says.

"Worth the taste though," says Yoongi, lips just barely brushing the shell of Jeongguk's ear, and Jeongguk's heart kicks up again. "They look perfectly ripe."

Jeongguk pickpockets Yoongi of his wallet before he can offer to pay. Shoves his own debit card at the cashier before Yoongi can get the words *let hyung treat you* out of his mouth.

"I asked you on the date. I'm paying."

Yoongi's dark eyes glitter.

Jeongguk pays, and doesn't feel so shaky about the cost. He's done more than enough dog walks to cover it. It feels nice not to have to flinch at the sight of a receipt.

Holly leads the way, and they walk all the way to the park. Yoongi loops Holly's leash around a tree with room to roam and Jeongguk spreads out the blanket.

They eat in this odd careful silence. Odd for them because usually Jeongguk and Yoongi talk their way through everything they do. But Jeongguk assumes that there can't always be conversation. Sometimes you need the quiet too. You need to know that you can be silent with a person and not want to escape.

The silence with Yoongi is a different beast altogether. Not unpleasant, but not entirely comfortable. Yoongi takes out a pocket knife and deftly slices the fresh mango into pieces. The juice shines on his fingertips, and Jeongguk watches him suck some off his thumb and feels himself turn sunburn pink.

Holly dozes belly-up in the sun. Around them, the grass is bright and bugs buzz in small swarms about them. Children's delighted screams ring over from the merry-go-round a ways away. If Jeongguk had his pencils right now he would draw it. Everything awash in yellow, shadows in the palest blue, summer in fullest swing.

“Jeongguk-ah.”

He turns, blinking in surprise to find Yoongi a little closer than anticipated. There’s a slice of mango in his fingers, bright and delicious looking, a question in the warm brown of his eyes.

Jeongguk nods, and Yoongi gently presses the fruit to Jeongguk’s lips.

He opens his mouth and takes it in, suppressing a shudder when Yoongi’s fingers just barely brush his bottom lip. Jeongguk chews slowly, sweet-tart flavor hitting his tongue. Yoongi was right. It’s perfectly ripe.

Yoongi’s gaze is riveted to Jeongguk’s as he swallows. Everything fades to a static and fuzzy quiet.

“Hyung,” Jeongguk says, seeing the same thing he feels reflected in Yoongi’s eyes right back at him. That same tentative cautious plea.

Yoongi’s hand is callous rough when it cups Jeongguk’s neck but his touch is gentle, feather light, leaving sticky prints on the back of Jeongguk’s neck. He’s not so much pulling Jeongguk into him for a kiss as he is guiding the movement, because Jeongguk’s swaying forward of his own accord, pushing their mouths together, the taste of mangoes between them.

“Oh,” says Jeongguk, as Yoongi’s hand comes up to press against his cheek, thumb stroking at the fullness of his cheek. “Oh hyung, oh oh oh.”

Babbling like an idiot, but incapable of stopping. Yoongi’s hands are sticky sweet on Jeongguk’s face, the touch of them lingering. Yoongi’s skin is feverish, like he’s been in the sun for a tad too long, the rays already turning him pink with it.

Jeongguk presses in again, insistent kisses that he gives without asking. Like plucking wildflowers to give, meaning to pick only the prettiest ones but being unable to decide which one you want to end on. This kiss, and this one, but maybe this one, and so on, until there’s a whole damn bushel.

They pull back, a hair’s breadth between them.

“I quit,” Jeongguk blurts.

“What,” Yoongi squawks. “You can’t quit. My dog is absolutely in love

with you.”

“Hyung,” Jeongguk says, and drops his head in the juncture of Yoongi’s shoulder, burrowing himself there. “I have to quit. It’s a conflict of interest. I can’t date my boss.”

“You’re walking my dog. I’m not exactly in a position of manipulative power over you.”

“Holly could suffer. If things didn’t work out. Divorce is awful on children.”

“Holly would do no such thing. He loves you. He told me himself. *He’s* the one who’s been asking me to call you back again and again.”

“Holly’s been asking about me, huh?” Jeongguk smiles into Yoongi’s warm skin, peeking upwards with huge eyes.

“Of course,” Yoongi clears his throat, looking adorably flustered. “What, did you think that I—”

Jeongguk kisses him before he can finish. Kisses him so fiercely and giggly that Yoongi starts to laugh too, this quiet cracking sound, like frogs in a riverbed after a rainstorm. Like when Jeongguk used to lie awake at night as a kid and listen to that low croaking cadence coming through the window and think to himself *how alive, how alive, how alive and wonderful the world is*.

He kisses Yoongi until Holly gets jealous, jumps up on both their laps and licks at their faces, yipping excitedly. All things around them, the air, the sunlight, the grass, the breeze, all of it sounds like the prettiest music that Jeongguk’s ever heard.

*

fin.

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